

Harmful Amendment Opposed by Congresswoman Slaughter Fails in the House of Representatives

Washington, DC - *Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today submitted the following Congressional Record Statement during debate on the Pence Amendment to H.R. 3293, the Labor, Health and Education Appropriations Act :*

Madame Chairman, I rise today in opposition to Mr. Pence's amendment. Pursuant to Federal Statute, no Title X funds can be spent on abortions. So the only conclusion to be drawn from the offering of this amendment is that Mr. Pence is attempting to use propaganda based on hypocrisy to wage war on family planning services. Mr. Pence's amendment would cut off 1.7 million women—more than one in three women who receive Title X services—from their trusted, family planning provider.

Multitudes of poor and low-income women cannot afford to purchase contraceptive services and supplies on their own. Half of all women who are sexually active, but do not want to get pregnant, need publicly funded services to help them access public health programs like Medicaid and Title X.

Low-income women are currently four times more likely to face an unintended pregnancy. 84 percent of Title X clients have incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and 61 percent are uninsured. That is why for most women, including women who want to have children, contraception is not an option; it is a basic health care necessity. Each year, publicly

funded family planning services help women to prevent an estimated one million unplanned pregnancies and 630,000 abortions.

From a public health standpoint, Title X family planning clinics are often the primary health care provider for low income women.

The Title X program provides comprehensive family planning services as well as a wide range of other preventive health care services, including breast exams and instruction on breast self-examination, Pap tests for early detection of cervical cancer or precancerous conditions, testing for high blood pressure, screening and appropriate treatment for sexually transmitted infections, HIV screening, counseling on adoption, foster care, and pregnancy termination and referrals to specialized health care.

In these tough economic times it is hard to understand why Mr. Pence would want to yet again launch an assault on public health care for low income women and families. I strongly urge my colleague to public health ahead of politics and vote NO on Mr. Pence's harmful amendment.